

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:  
detecting means for detecting a link installation;  
managing means for defining a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected, and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;  
link metric rank assigning means for assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;  
data rank assigning means for assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics; and  
selecting means for selecting a link by ~~analyzing comparing each link based on~~ each individual stored metric ~~corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually~~  
~~comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link~~  
~~metrics in the order assigned by the data rank assigning means~~, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.

Claim 2 (Original): The link manager according to Claim 1, wherein  
said managing means generates a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The link manager according to Claim 2, wherein  
said managing means generates a record corresponding to a new link and records data corresponding to link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said

record is detected and said managing means deletes said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable.

Claims 4-5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A link management method comprising:

detecting a link installation;

defining a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;

assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;

assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics; and

selecting a link by analyzing comparing each link based on each individual stored metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics in order of the assigned ranks, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The link management method according to Claim 6, further comprising:

generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The link management method according to Claim 7, further comprising:

generating a record corresponding to a new link and recording data corresponding to link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and deleting said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable.

Claims 9-10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A computer program product including a computer-readable memory with a computer program code mechanism stored therein, which when executed by a computer causes the computer to perform a method of link management, comprising:

detecting a link installation;  
defining a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;  
generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective link metrics, for each link on said table;  
assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;  
assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining said respective link metrics;

comparing each individual metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics in the order of the assigned ranks; and

selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank  
thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.

~~when said predetermined preference is given, analyzing each link based on each individual metric in the ranking order of the respective metrics and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.~~

Claim 12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The computer program product according to Claim 11, further comprising:

generating a record corresponding to a new link and recording data corresponding to link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and  
deleting said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable.

Claim 14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:  
detecting means for detecting a link installation;  
managing means for defining a plurality of constant link metrics and variable link metrics, each constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table, said managing means monitoring the variable link metrics which vary over time;

link metric rank assigning means for assigning ranks to said constant and variable link metrics, and assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said constant and variable link metrics; and

selecting means for selecting a link by analyzing comparing each link based on each individual stored constant and variable link metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics in the order assigned by the link metric rank assigning means, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The link manager according to Claim 15, wherein said managing means generates a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The link manager according to Claim 16, wherein said managing means generates a record corresponding to a new link and records data corresponding to constant and variable link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and

    said managing means deletes said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable.

Claims 18-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A link management method comprising:  
detecting a link installation;

defining a plurality of constant link metrics and variable link metrics, each constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table; assigning ranks to said constant and variable link metrics; assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said constant and variable link metrics; and a selecting step of selecting a link by analyzing comparing each link based on each individual stored constant and variable metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics in order of the assigned ranks, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The link management method according to Claim 20, further comprising:

generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The link management method according to Claim 21, further comprising:

generating a record corresponding to a new link and recording data corresponding to constant and variable link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and

deleting said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable.

Claims 23-24 (Canceled).

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A computer program product including a computer-readable memory with a computer program code mechanism stored therein, which when executed by a computer causes the computer to perform a method of link management, comprising:

detecting a link installation;  
defining a plurality of constant link metric and variable link metrics, each constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;

generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics, for each link on said table;

assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;

assigning ranks to each of the plurality of characteristics corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics;

comparing each individual constant and variable link metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics in the order of the assigned ranks; and

selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.

~~analyzing each link based on each individual metric in the ranking order of the respective constant and variable metrics and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank.~~

Claim 26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The computer program product according to Claim 25, further comprising:

generating a record corresponding to a new link and recording data corresponding to constant and variable link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and

deleting said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable.

Claim 28 (Canceled).

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:  
a detector configured to detect a link installation;  
a processor configured to define a plurality of constant link metrics and variable link metrics, each constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;  
a processor configured to assign ranks to said constant and variable link metrics, and assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said constant and variable link metrics; and  
a processor configured to select a link by comparing analyzing each link based on each individual stored constant and variable link metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said

respective link metrics in the order assigned by the data rank assigning means, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank.

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:

- a detector configured to detect a link installation;
- a processor configured to define a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each detected link;
- an interface configured to receive an input to rank said respective link metrics and receive an input to rank each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics; and
- a processor configured to select a link by comparing analyzing each link based on each individual stored metric corresponding to each link in order of rank by individually comparing each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics in the order assigned by the data rank assigning means, and select a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.